

## **Did You Ask A Good Question Today?**

*By David B. Burns*

Isidor I. Rabi, the 1944 Nobel Prize winner in physics was once asked, "Why did you become a scientist, rather than a doctor or lawyer, like the other kids in your neighborhood?"

"My mother made me a scientist. Every other Jewish mother in Brooklyn would ask her child after school: 'So? Did you learn anything today?' Not my mother. She always asked me a different question. 'Izzy,' she would say, 'did you ask a good question today?' That difference made me a scientist."

Isidor Rabi wasn't just any scientist. He was in the top one-percent. In addition to his Nobel Prize, his work contributed to the invention of radar, the atomic bomb, the laser and the atomic clock. His excellence stemmed from asking good questions. And he is not alone in understanding that success is driven by asking good questions. A person in any profession where results matter (is there any other kind?) needs to cultivate the habit of asking good questions.

Doctors understand the need to ask questions - and listen carefully to the answers - before prescribing a successful treatment. Therapists know the value of asking good questions for successful counseling. Employers utilize the power of good questions in successfully determining which job candidate to hire.

Business success is also driven by asking good questions and then finding – and sometimes struggling for - the answers. For several years now, I've used a systematic method of asking business-related questions I learned from Dan Kennedy's book, No B.S. Time Management for Entrepreneurs. His method is simply to, at the end of each week, ask one main question stem: "What do I know this week about . . .?" and then complete and answer the question in a variety of ways. Examples include: your business, your industry, a client, a marketing method.

This habit prompts me to withdraw briefly from the frantic pace of life and pay attention to profitable ideas I would have otherwise missed. If you're like me, you can use all the profit you can get.

Get Kennedy's book, and try it for yourself. Start your own habit of asking good questions. And when you need a reminder, just imagine Isidor Rabi's mother whispering in your ear: "Did you ask a good question today?"

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